



**Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
DANE COUNTY

## February 2024 Program Report

This summary report highlights a few of the programs or projects Dane County Extension Educators were working on in February to provide a sample of the type and breadth of programming offered. Also included are upcoming events. Be sure to check out the report on the Stoughton Sustainability Committee process at the end. If you would like more information on any of our programs, please contact me or visit our [website](#).

Carrie Edgar, Director

### Agriculture

#### Sarah Janes Ugoretz Joins Dane County Extension

Sarah Janes Ugoretz (she/her) is the new Diversified Vegetable Extension Educator. She brings knowledge and experience to support farmers across the region. She has an MA from Brandeis University and a Ph.D. from UW-Madison, where her research delved into the practices and conditions fostering positive labor experiences for farmers locally and nationwide. Passionate about fostering peer-to-peer learning environments, she thrives on working closely with farmers, both owners and workers alike. Her expertise is deeply rooted in her farm experiences, including a decade of running Harmony Valley Farm's stand at the Dane County Farmers Market.



Contact Sarah at [JanesUgoretz.Sarah@countyofdane.com](mailto:JanesUgoretz.Sarah@countyofdane.com) or 608-572-3420.

**Alison Pfau**, Regional Dairy Educator, coordinated the Repro Roadshow, an in-person program that provided the latest research-based information to improve the understanding of current timed AI protocols for use with sexed semen for dairy professionals. Extension Specialists Dr. Paul Fricke and Assistant Professor Dr. JP Martins provided an update on UW-Madison dairy reproduction research, covering heifer reproduction, sexed semen, the high fertility cycle, and more. The event was held in different locations around Wisconsin and attracted veterinarians and farmers.

**Will Fulwider**, Regional Crops & Soils Educator, presented to utility workers and engineers at the Midwest Rural Energy Council Annual Conference on the potential for agrivoltaics in utility and community-scale solar sites in Wisconsin. The goal was to inform attendees on the rationale behind agrivoltaics increasing community reception to solar projects and approaches to integrating agriculture on sites to increase adoption of the practice in Wisconsin.

**Will Fulwider**, Regional Crops & Soils Educator, also partnered with an Extension colleague to present at the 2024 Marbleseed Organic Farming Conference focused on contextualizing and informing organic grain farmers on climate smart agricultural practices, and their respective effects on greenhouse gas emissions. The goal was to help organic farmers gain familiarity with climate smart practices as well as how to calculate their farms' carbon footprint and identify obstacles to wider adoption of certain high impact practices.

### Community Development

**Jess Guffey Calkins**, Food Systems Educator, is engaged with colleagues in planning a series of food entrepreneurship webinars to be held in April 2024. She is also assisting the Dane County Food Council on a strategic plan for 2024-2025.

**Sharon Lezberg**, Community Development Educator, is collaborating with her Extension colleagues on planning and recruiting for an Elevando Wisconsin Primavera / Spring 2024 Cohort. The goal is to build leadership skills and networks with Latino leaders across southern Wisconsin to increase leadership development and civic engagement.

## Health and Wellbeing

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**Edwin Huayta Perez, Holly Simon, Kelsi Salm, Phin Ter Thao**, Nutrition Educators, are teaching a monthly series of Early Childhood Education parents and their children on role modeling healthy choices, cooking and eating together, and incorporating physical activity into each day. The educators demonstrate how to involve children in meal preparation as well as encouraging eating together and allowing children to serve themselves according to age appropriate ability.

## Horticulture

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**Lisa Johnson**, Horticulture educator, presented three sessions on Container gardening, Square foot and raised bed gardening, and Soil and plant health at the 2024 annual Midwest Garden Expo. The sessions provide information to gardeners to have success in food production and ornamental growing. The presentations focus on physical health and the emotional benefits of gardening as well as producing nutritious food and environmentally friendly gardens.

## Human Development and Relationships

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**Clare Dahl**, Financial Security Educator, along with an Extension Specialist presented a workshop on the Earned Income Tax Credit for staff at the Forward Service Corporation's monthly Virtual Learning Series. Through this, staff learn how to help their clients claim the EITC thereby increasing the resources they have for paying bills and reaching goals.

**Kula Yang**, Family Engagement & Relationships Educator, is collaborating with her Extension colleagues on a study to learn about the continuing education preferences of the Wisconsin early childhood workforce. Results from this study will help Extension create research-based programs and supports for the early childhood workforce.

## Positive Youth Development

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**Lisa Curley**, 4-H Extension Educator, developed an orientation program for Dane County 4-H new members to receive information about the program and club involvement. The goal of the orientation program is to increase awareness of 4-H resources available while creating a sense of belonging and engagement.

**Ely Moya Malaver**, Bilingual Youth Development Educator, presented Juntos, a five-session family engagement program for Latine middle school-aged youth and families, where they learned about education, effective communication, the transitions from Middle School to High School and from High School to post-secondary education, college readiness, and leadership development through culturally responsive facilitation, activities, and presentations. This program held in Middleton empowers Latine youth and their parents to achieve academic success and to establish education as a family goal.



**Taylor Seale**, Community Youth Development Educator, is planning and doing outreach for the proposed Fitchburg Teen Center community development project. Efforts include organizing program logistics and recruiting youth to participate in market analysis, health equity research, and community engagement efforts.

## Upcoming Events

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[Retirement Planning Today](#) – Several dates available

[Green Thumb Vegetable Gardening Series](#), online – various dates

[Wise Wisconsin Learning Series for Older Adults](#), online - various dates

[Seed Starting Workshop](#) – March 16 9 am – 12 pm at the Dane County Extension office

[Strong Couples](#), a free online self-paced course you can take any time

[Tree and Shrub Pruning workshop](#) – March 23 9 am – 12 pm at the Dane County Extension office

[Elevando Wisconsin](#): Leadership Development Program, online series, - March 15 – May 17 9 am–12 pm

Visit our [website](#) to learn more about Extension and other upcoming program opportunities.



# Stoughton Sustainability Planning

## Engaging community to develop a shared vision for the future

**Situation:** Dane County Extension Educators, Sharon Lezberg, Community Development, and Michelle Probst, Natural Resources, were asked by the Stoughton Sustainability Committee to provide information about community engagement. An introductory presentation then led to a request from the committee to assist with community engagement on the development of a sustainability plan for the City of Stoughton.

**Response:** The Extension educators worked with the Stoughton Sustainability Committee to develop an engagement plan that included focus groups, a survey, and a community wide sustainability dialogue. Each of these activities provided opportunities for the community to share ideas on how to make Stoughton a more sustainable community. The survey provided a baseline on community values, ideas, and concerns that pertain to sustainability. 594 residents completed the survey and 237 provided text responses for how to make the city more sustainable. Focus groups with educators, businesses, environmental groups, and anchor institutions provided more nuanced perspectives. The dialogue engaged nearly 50 residents in small group discussions in a variety of issues areas. The conversations provided input on educational opportunities, advancing solutions, reducing barriers, fostering community leadership, and collaboration and partnerships.



Stoughton Sustainability Committee

The Extension team worked with Committee members to design each of these engagement processes. Extension facilitated focus groups and community dialogue sessions, wrote up the results, and provided a report and analysis of the results. The committee discussed the reports and drew conclusions to inform the sustainability report.

Extension educators help communities hold conversations about important issues, identify a shared vision for their future and engage residents. We work with community partners to ensure every voice is heard.

**Results:** After nearly a year and a half of committee meetings and engagement activities, the Stoughton Sustainability Committee reviewed all the records from the engagement process and generated a list of actions for potential inclusion in the plan. Over 200 actions were identified! The committee hired a consultant to help prioritize and narrow the list down to 50 high impact, achievable actions. The committee then developed prioritization criteria and a scorecard for each recommended action to determine priorities based on potential impact, effort, and equity considerations.

The Sustainability Committee released a draft of the Sustainability Report in February 2024. The report will guide the policies and efforts of city departments, committees, and commissions. The report identifies local and regional partners for collaboration and implementation. The plan identifies goals and outlines priority actions and is grounded with an equity lens.

Participants at the Sustainability Dialogue evaluated the event highly, indicating it was beneficial and timely. Comments from the survey indicated the majority of respondents were very supportive of the City initiating a sustainability plan. And residents indicated they are concerned about climate change and want the City to be leading.

While Extension's role in the process has not yet been formally evaluated, there are several outcomes that are noteworthy:

- New partnerships have been formed with County departments, non-profit organizations, and businesses that will support implementation of the sustainability recommendations.
- Committee members learned how local government works and built skills in facilitation and public engagement.
- The committee was nominated for the 2023 Sustain Dane 'Live Forward' awards that acknowledges change-makers who are locally promoting thriving sustainability, community healing, and resiliency.
- The Sustainability Committee Chair received a scholarship to travel and present at the Midwest Climate Resiliency Conference in 2023.

*UW-Madison Extension brought valuable expertise to help us gather and understand the perspectives of our community. The process was professional, research-based, inclusive, and engaging. This was an essential piece to inform the writing of our sustainability plan."*  
~ Sustainability Committee Chair